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50 years after Bandung, Asia-Africa Summit adopts new pact
T. Rajamoorthy and Hira Jhamtani

The Asian-African Summit to commemorate the golden anniversary of the Bandung Declaration on 23 April adopted the Declaration on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). The two-day event was attended by 89 Asian and African heads of states and envoys, and 19 observer countries and sub-regional organizations.

The Summit climaxed with a visit by the heads of state to the city of Bandung (in West Java) on April 24 to reenact the historic walk of the first generation of Asian and African leaders of the Bandung Conference, from the Savoy Homman Hotel to Gedung Merdeka (the venue of the 1955 Conference). The leaders also planted some Asian and African trees to mark the historical occasion.

The Declaration of NAASP focused on three areas of cooperation between the two continents, namely:

1. Political Solidarity, which commits Ministers to take various steps to promote peace and stability and prevent conflict in the region.
2. Economic Cooperation, under which steps would be taken to reduce poverty and promote greater flows of trade and investment between the two continents.
3. Socio-cultural Relations, to foster more people-to-people cultural contacts and promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures.

Based on the Ten Principles of the 1955 Bandung Conference and on a commitment to work towards a just, democratic, transparent and accountable society with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, the NAASP emphasizes the need to promote practical cooperation based on areas such as trade,

industry, investment, finance, tourism, ITC, energy, health, transportation, agriculture, water resources and fisheries.

It also contains commitments to promote collective and unified effort in multilateral fora, to address issues such as armed conflicts, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, as well as to prevent conflicts and resolve disputes by peaceful means. The NAASP also affirms the need to promote human resource development, enhance capacity building and technical cooperation between the two regions.

The Declaration envisages an institutionalized process through the convening of a Summit of Heads of State/Government every four years, a Foreign Ministers' meeting every two years and a sectoral Ministerial and other technical meetings deemed necessary. A Business Summit in conjunction with the Heads of State Summit is to be held every four years.

In their speeches, most of the Asian and African leaders seemed to have a remarkable identity of views, namely, that the Bandung Conference of 1955 was held during the era of colonialism, apartheid and the Cold War, that it played a decisive role in ending colonialism and apartheid. However, the socioeconomic aspirations remained unfulfilled.

And with the end of the Cold War, and confronted with challenges of globalization, developing countries have to work together to reap the benefits of globalization.

The NAASP was also seen by them as a major step to promote practical cooperation between the two continents to address globalization, poverty and underdevelopment.

The Summit began with a welcoming speech by the President of Indonesia, Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in which he paid tribute to the first generation of Asian and African leaders who launched the Bandung Conference.

He said that what they did was truly remarkable. At a volatile time when the new world was searching for order, they awakened the collective spirit of Asia and Africa, they set forth a new course, and they ignited a new sense of solidarity and activism that transformed the fate of the two continents. "In short, what they did was no less than change the world and shape the second half of the 20th century".

While noting that the number of nations in both continents participating in the conference has grown from 29 in 1955 to 106 in 2005, he reminded the participants that this was not a nostalgic gathering or an occasion to lament about the problems of Asia and Africa. "We come here, because we need to ask the hard questions and find real answers about how Asia and Africa can adapt and respond to challenges of today's world".

He then posed the question: why did it take 50 years - a lifetime - for Asia and Africa to reconvene, after the success of the 1955 Summit? He further asked: if the Bandung Spirit is still alive, how can it be made relevant to today's circumstances?

In his opinion, although the Asia-Africa process faltered, the Bandung Spirit is still relevant, in fact even more so than it was 50 years ago. For, as he reminded delegates, Asia-Africa remains the missing link in the worldwide structure of inter-regional relations. Noting that across the Atlantic Ocean, there is a formal alliance between Europe and North America, and APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum straddle the Pacific Ocean, there is no formal Asia-Africa link across the Indian Ocean, despite the pioneering efforts of the Bandung Conference.

"Our meeting today is, therefore, an inauguration of that bridge across the Indian Ocean", he said.

According to him, the international environment today is much more conducive for the coming together of Asia and Africa as a result of the end of the Cold War, the growth of communications and trade, the proliferation of bilateral and

multilateral ties, and a more sympathetic environment to the problems of the third world.

He pointed out that 106 countries now grace Asia and Africa, comprising more than one-half of the membership of the United Nations, encompassing an area that is almost half of the world. "We speak for 4.6 billion people or 73% of the world's population. Our combined Gross Domestic Product amounts to US\$ 9.3 trillion".

Yet, despite all these, both continents are burdened with problems, including poverty, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, armed conflicts and corruption.

"That is why today," he continued, "we have to sound a different battle cry. In 1955, the battle cry was "Freedom", today, the cries should be the battle for human dignity and good governance".

He then expounded on the nature of the NAASP, which would be implemented through interaction at three levels: intergovernmental, sub-regional and people-to-people. It would promote a just, democratic, accountable and harmonious society, based on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, 'the most basic of which is the right to live'.

Under the Partnership, the two continents should "coordinate moves and speak with one strong and clear voice". This will ensure that "the smallest among us will not be marginalized". In this respect, he expressed satisfaction that through this Summit, "both continents remain unyielding in their support for the Palestinian cause in their epic struggle to gain their independence".

South African President and Co-Chair of the Summit (together with the Indonesian President) Thabo Mbeki, in his opening address, said the Asia-Africa Conference is an effort to walk in the footsteps of the leaders that conceived the Bandung Conference. There is a need to assess what progress has been achieved after 50 years

and how to give meaning to the Bandung Spirit through the combined strength of two continents.

The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in his speech, recollected with pride when leaders from his continent, defying the colonial powers, came to Indonesia and joined hands with the Asian leaders to adopt the Bandung declaration. "At that time, it seemed an audacious and creative thing to do. Looking back, it was a major turning point in world history".

He paid tribute to the leaders of the Bandung conference, whose vision eventually led to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the G-77 and transformed the UN. He urged the Asian and African countries to support his effort at reforming the United Nations (UN). "If we are to make our world fairer, freer and safer for all its inhabitants, the institution of the UN should reflect the world of 2005, not 1945, particularly the Security Council".

The Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, also the current chairman of the NAM, expressed abiding gratitude to the leaders who had gathered in Bandung in 1955 for their contribution in inspiring the founding of the movement in 1961. He reminded delegates that while the shackles of colonialism have been broken, many countries in Asia and Africa have yet to attain the proper economic and social attributes of independence.

He said diseases and ignorance continue to exist. Multilateralism is under threat. Technological transformation and globalization have not eliminated extreme poverty. Many in the developing world believe both factors have accentuated the asymmetries that characterize the multi-lateral system. Furthermore, "the preoccupation of rich countries with counter-terrorism has diverted much valuable resources from the development process".

Badawi supported the NAASP and highlighted areas of cooperation among Asian-African countries. He said that on

UN reforms, the countries must work together to remove power asymmetries institutionalized by the current arrangements in the UN system. The reform of the UN system must aim towards strengthening the multilateral system and principles should prevail over power.

He added that countries must work to ensure that Intellectual Property Rights serve development goals, and in this context, access to affordable medicines for HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases is a priority. Countries must continue to maintain their position for complete and general disarmament, but also insist that non-nuclear weapon states have unimpeded access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Badawi said Asia and Africa must take the lead in strengthening ties with civil society which can be a force and factor for national development. They must also work to combat negative perceptions about both continents depicted by the international media, and in the endeavor to have their stories heard, good governance at the national level must prevail in each country in the region.

The President of China, Hu Jintao, in his address said that hegemonism, terrorism, local wars and transnational crimes are still undermining peace and stability in the world, while environmental degradation, natural disasters and communicable diseases continue to threaten the survival and development of mankind. Developing countries are faced with a host of difficulties and problems in their effort to achieve economic and social development, with some even on the brink of being marginalized as a result of uneven economic development, widening gap between the North and the South, and rising trade protectionism, as well as their own inadequate development.

He added, "We share a challenging problem of defending rights and interests of the developing countries and a just and rational new international and political order".

Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, said, "The greatest tribute to the visionary leaders who met in Bandung in 1955 is to be faithful to this Summit's commitments". He further said that the Summit theme, "Reinvigorating the Bandung Spirit" should challenge member countries to seriously confront the threat of unilateralism, which constitutes as grave a threat to world peace, stability and development, as that posed by transnational crimes and terrorism.

He welcomed the NAASP and said that the partnership should provide practical linkages in trade investment, human resource development and technology. He hoped that "The wisdom of the Bandung Conference and the NAM will continue to hold the key to the quest for an egalitarian world, where nations, weak and strong, all play their part in making the world a better place".

Elaborating on the dangers of unilateralism, Mugabe referred to the US and Britain's war against Iraq, and said that the Summit should be concerned that the UN process has been rammed into submission by unilateralism.

He accused the US and Britain of employing sophistry and blatant lies to go to war against Iraq, making the yet-to-be-proved claim that Iraq had stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, when in fact the greater danger comes from America's and Britain's weapons of mass deception.

He also said that unilateralism, which he characterized as "fascist international dictatorship", is also undermining democratic processes in different regions through interference in internal domestic affairs. He alleged that his country has been a victim of such interference in its domestic affairs through several measures including declared and undeclared sanctions purely because, "we dared to challenge white privilege by embarking upon a process of equitable distribution of our land". He charged that the same weapon of mass deception used by Britain and her allies have viciously portrayed

Zimbabwe as lawless, disorderly and undemocratic.

He added that unbridled interference in local affairs also continues to manifest itself in Palestine where "we see a spirited fight against a viable Palestinian State seeking to live side by side with Israel". He said the big powers have exhibited clear and unacceptable hypocrisy on the Palestinian question: "kid gloves for Israel, but more rigorous benchmarks are set for the Palestine and its down trodden people".

He said Asian and African countries should confront the threat of unilateralism by realizing that such unilateralism constitutes as grave a threat to world peace, stability and development, as that posed by transnational crimes and terrorism. He stressed that unilateralism or the so-called unipolar world cannot be the yardstick by which international relations are conducted. He declared, "We cherish the equality of nations, the sovereignty of all countries, and inviolability of their right to self determination".

The Prime Minister of Lesotho, Pakalitha B. Mosisili, also took up the issue of unilateralism as opposed to multilateralism, pointing out that the leaders of the Bandung Conference understood that multilateralism, as opposed to unilateralism, was the only legitimate key to address international issues. He went on to say that where multilateralism has been engaged, positive results have always been visible. "The same cannot be said where unilateralism was the preferred option".

The Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh said that the declaration on NAASP outlines the guiding principles for joint action to achieve development goals in Asia and Africa in a changed global environment. "It must awaken a global conscience that recognizes the moral imperatives of social justice, poverty alleviation and the core elements of our Millennium Development Goals," he said. He went on to say that the need to create new structures of mutual support, solidarity and cooperation to benefit from

best practices and appropriate technologies is as urgent today as fifty years ago.

The Vice-President of Mauritius, Abdool Raouf Bundhun, highlighted that "the debt problem of Asia and Africa is worsening. We are still in the debt trap". Any further delay to address this concretely will bring these continents further away from the mainstream of development.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, Chirau Ali Mwakwere, pointed out that the international trading system is influenced by the interests of the developed world. Thus it is necessary for Asia and Africa to work towards the promotion of greater market access for goods and seek removal of costly constraints on exports put by the developed world, which 'ironically, outweighs aid flows.'

The Cuban Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rafael Dausa Cespedes, who attended the Summit as an observer, said that the principles of Bandung remain as valid as before "when attempts are being made to impose on us a neo-liberal globalization, and our sovereignty, independence and self-determination are threatened". Recalling that Cuba had contributed to the liberation struggle of many African and Asian countries, he pledged his country's continued support for "the heroic people of Palestine until they are able to attain their true and complete independence".

In closing the Summit, Yudhoyono said that the most important legacy of this conference is the establishment of a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership which he described as "a milestone in the history of our movement". He pledged that through this Partnership, "we will create in the years ahead a legacy of socioeconomic and cultural development to future generations of Asians and Africans".

Besides the official Summit, there were also several other parallel events for two weeks starting on 14 April to commemorate the Bandung Conference. These included an Asian-African Business Summit (attended by 30 countries), and

NGO conferences, as well as trade fairs and rallies.

At the meeting of Foreign Ministers on 20 April, Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. Wirajuda said the idea of having a New Asian African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) emerged at the ASEAN Summit in 2003, when the then Chairman of the African Union (AU), President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, invited ASEAN to engage with the AU in promoting inter-regional cooperation. ASEAN accepted the idea and the issue was pursued further at the first Asian-African Sub-Regional Organizations Conference (AASROC) in Bandung, in July 2003, followed by the second AASROC in Durban, August 2004.

The future of Asia-Africa collaboration

Yash Tandon,

Need to Locate Business in the Wider Context

I. Thesis

1. The rise of the dynamic economies of Asia (especially China and India) provides new opportunities for challenging the currently dominant North/South axis of trade, and encouraging emergent Asia-Africa trade relations. There is evidence that the Asia-Africa trade and investment ties are on the increase, reflecting a new geo-political configuration. Some African countries are already putting in place “Looking East” strategies as a means of reducing their dependence on traditional Western markets and sources of capital and technologies.

2. The private sector is of course one of the principal agents of change of trading patterns from North/South to South/South relations.

3. However, the relationship between Asia and Africa must be based on qualitatively different principles from the currently prevailing relations between these two regions and the West. If this is not done, then the old patterns of trade between the West and Africa will simply be repeated with Asia substituting Europe and America in an asymmetrical power and

trading relationship, where Africa continues to export raw materials to Asia and imports finished products and finance capital from Asia.

4. I do this in full recognition of the mandate of the current Business Forum. However, if the business concerns are not located within the larger context then the whole purpose of setting the discussion in the context of the “Bandung spirit” would be diminished.

II. Main argument

At a minimum Asia and Africa need to share a common understanding of what challenges they face in the present times, and in the light of this, they need to work towards a common strategy to face these challenges, and take advantage of the opportunities of the new geo-political dynamics.

Secondly, in this collaborative effort, however, they must recognise that Africa (overall) is a weaker partner, and therefore principles must be agreed between them, and corresponding institutions created, that are sensitive to the vulnerabilities of Africa. Central to the relations between them is the *principle of non-reciprocity*, which is a recognised principle of trade between unequal partners.

Thirdly, although Asian countries are overly stronger than African, vast numbers of their populations may, in fact, be worse off (in terms of income and welfare) than their African counterparts. And therefore, ways must be devised to address the issue of poverty and the increasing income and welfare gap between the poor and the rich within the countries of Asia and Africa, as well as issues no less poignant, related to governance and accountability.

The first proposition relates to the *global dimension*, the second to the *inter-regional dimension*, and the third to the domestic or *national dimension*. All three are important and inter-related. The paper, however, focuses only on the first two.

To put it concisely, Asia and Africa have much to gain from their collaboration

provided certain common understanding develops on the challenges and the opportunities that this new phase of Asian dynamism presents to the two regions; fair and just principles and institutions are put in place to make these efforts mutually supportive and complementary; and serious political commitment is actively demonstrated to address the domestic challenges of poverty, and the issue of democratic governance. No attempt must be made to gloss over or underestimate the complexity of this endeavour.

Mutually beneficial collaborative efforts must be based on a balance between a shared vision (or at least a shared perspective) and a hard-headed sense of realism of what is possible and practical in the short (up to five years) and the medium (up to ten years) terms.

III. The Broader Context: Triple Challenge that face Asia and Africa

- A. In the 1980s, the rise of neo-liberal globalisation;
- B. In the 1990s, the threat of speculative finance; and
- C. In the 2000s, the startling prospect of wars against countries of Asia and Africa in the name of fighting terrorism or “responsibility to protect”.

No time to analyse in detail here. Need to understand these three phenomena and their devastating effects on Africa and Asia (and Latin America). These are not simply sequential challenges. They have not just come one after the other. They have come one on top of the other. It is like having a deck of cards put on top of a second deck, and a third on top of the first two. Instead of having to tackle one challenge, the countries of Asia and Africa have to tackle three challenges, all at the same time.

IV. Concept of Development

Development is not only a *definitional* matter; it is also above all a *political* issue. It requires the *political leadership* of countries of Asia and Africa to agree on what they regard as the necessary and minimal attributes of development. Here

is a political definition of development that the leaders of Second Bandung might want to think about.

Development, in its most inclusive sense, would involve the satisfaction of the basic material and social needs of the people (especially those most vulnerable) through a system of governance that is democratic and accountable to the people, and through minimizing (and if possible eliminating) imperial interventions in developing societies.

While the business communities of Asia and Africa may work out mutually beneficial arrangements, unless the basic human needs of the populations are satisfied, there is likely to be discontent and disaffection threatening the legitimacy of the system. It is also necessary to respond to the democratic sentiments of the people, not only because democracy is inherently a positive value but also because its deficit could provide excuses for the powerful countries of the West to intervene in the affairs of the weaker members of the South, especially in Africa.

V. Non-Alignment Refined in the Spirit of Bandung

In the light of these broader issues, how might a new Bandung look like in the contemporary period and in the face of the triple challenge our countries face?

Non-alignment of the earlier era had both an *activist* as well as a *rejectionist* side to it. What was rejected was that the countries of Asia and Africa be driven, willy-nilly, into the conflict between the “Western” capitalist world and the “Eastern” communist world. The *activist* side to it was the affirmation of the five (later increased to ten) Bandung principles that embodied aspirations towards peaceful co-existence, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, and collaboration between the nations of the South towards creating a new international economic order, as well as providing a middle ground between the contending

militarised and bipolarised world of the “west” and the “East”.

The new Bandung on the *rejection* front, must clearly state the following:

1. *Rejection of war as an instrument of policy*, and of the doctrine of preventive or pre-emptive war.
2. *Rejection of extra-territorial jurisdiction of the hegemons*, including the doctrine of “humanitarian intervention” or the newly coined phrase – “responsibility to protect” – as a pretext to justify hegemonic intervention in the affairs of the countries of the third world.
3. *Rejection of double standards* in which, for example, the countries of the third world must practice “free trade” whilst the hegemonic states practice protectionism.
4. *Rejection of unilateralism* on the part of the superpower hegemon.
5. *Rejection of the “Washington Consensus”*, the “one-size-fits-all” formula and the unfettered domination of the WTO and the BWIs.
6. *Rejection of the idea that market is the arbiter of all human values*. In this respect, therefore, rejection of the practices that turn nature and the environment, as well as vulnerable sections of society – including the labour and dignity of women, children, minorities, and refugees – as marketable commodities.
7. *Rejection of the domination of a few hundred global transnational corporations* that control the world’s finances, natural resources, research and technology, production, and distribution outlets.
8. *Rejection of excessive dependence on foreign direct investments (FDIs)*, as they are essentially instruments of converting domestic assets into foreign or foreign-controlled assets. Also, a nuanced and selective disengagement or dissociation, from a system of speculative finance whose volatility and precariousness can overnight destroy even relatively healthy economies.
9. *Rejection of policies that undermine or subvert the South’s policy options*.

The countries of Asia and Africa (and Latin America) must collectively *resist* (disalign or dissociate) themselves from such principles and practices of the hegemonic nations as would compromise their sovereignty.

10. *Rejection of aid and charity* and a dialogue with the West on basis of equality, fairness in trading relations (including fair prices for their commodities and products of labour).
11. *Rejection of invitations to join “coalitions of the willing”* created by the hegemonic powers to give their interventionist policies to the third world, legitimacy.

However, there is also a more *positive* side to the contemporary non-alignment strategy. The following list gives the main elements of this strategy. The list is neither comprehensive nor prioritised.

1. *Respect for international law*, though there are aspects of it that may need review in view of the demands of the present times.
2. *Support to strengthen the United Nations*, though there are also aspects of it (for example, the composition and powers of the Security Council) that need to be reviewed in the light of the contemporary exigencies and power realities.
3. *Recognition of the relative weakness of the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa*, and therefore the development of a relationship between Asia and Africa based on *non-reciprocity* as its central principle (rather than the mercantile principle based on competition and winner takes all).
4. *An alternative policy on Science and Technology* based on harnessing the collective knowledge and wisdom of the people (as opposed to the present blind emulation of techno-science that turns nature and human labour as marketable commodities), and distribution of technology between countries of the south on the basis of *solidarity* (rather than on the basis of intellectual property rights).
5. *A people-led* (as opposed to the BWI and donor-led) *development strategy*.

6. The *involvement of the civil society* in preparations for negotiations with the hegemonic countries, including negotiations in the WTO and with the BWIs – a kind of “Peoples’ Bandung”.
7. At the regional and bi-regional levels, a *grassroots-led regional integration* (as opposed to the Western countries-led integration). In this respect the promotion of the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) between countries of the South. The GSTP, in fact, is an aspect of disengagement, or nonalignment, in that it is a system of trade preferences where trade concessions made in a South-South context do not have to be extended to the developed countries.
8. At the national economic level, an *alternative production system*, one that is based on domestic demand and human needs, and the use of local resources and domestic savings (as opposed to the present export-oriented strategy, based on foreign investments). This should lead to the *horizontal* integration of agriculture and industry (as opposed to the inherited vertical integration of each sector separately with the economies of the empire), and an *increasing* (rather than as at present diminishing) returns to labour.
9. A *pro-active strategy of protecting and nurturing the environment and the world’s natural resources* (as opposed to its wanton exploitation under the present system).
10. A strategy where *women’s rights are in focus as the basis for a healthy and productive society* (as opposed to the present system based on the exploitation of women’s labour, only followed by minor reparation activities to hide the hideous effects of neo-liberal globalization on the women).
11. A strategy of *redistribution of the wealth and opportunities* from the so-called formal sector in society to the informal sectors, and infrastructural and state support to the *Small and Medium Enterprises* (as opposed to the present system of focusing primarily on mega-corporations, and the integration of the informal sectors

through their providing cheap inputs and a reservoir of semi-employed labour).

12. A strategy where *education is linked with production*, and with improving the technical and managerial as well as research and development skills of workers and those directly in control of matters of production and governance (as opposed to education for a bureaucratic and technocratic elite).
13. A strategy of *alliance and networking* with national, regional and global forces, including peoples’ movements and civil society organisations in the western countries (as opposed to the present system of co-optation of social forces in the neo-liberal globalisation process).

VI. Immediate Concerns that require joint action by Asia and Africa

Within the context of the larger challenge, as defined above, there are, however, issues that need immediate attention by the countries of Asia and Africa. The following are some of these issues:

1. One is the concern about the effects of the end of the textile quotas beginning this year on the textile industries in Africa. As for Europe and the US they are contemplating taking action against the influx of Chinese goods in their markets, and China has already put in place export restraint measures. Africa, however, is in no position to take safeguard measures against Chinese imports. It would be useful if the affected countries in Africa take advantage of this Business Summit to discuss how Africa can protect itself from its textile industries being destroyed. Need to think in terms of non-reciprocity and compensating mechanisms.

2. The WTO is to meet in its Sixth session in Hong Kong in December 2005. But already by July the General Council may have set out the basic outlines of the so-called “Doha Development Round”. A number of contentious issues remain unsettled, among them the perennial question of agricultural subsidies. Here there are issues that need to be resolved

between the so-called *Group of 20* third world countries led by India, Brazil and South Africa, and the *Group of 33* smaller countries that are concerned about the effects of agricultural liberalisation on their food security and survival of their small holder producers. The affected countries need to sit together and ways found to accommodate the issue of special products and safeguard measures for the smaller African and Asian countries, with the export interests of the G20 countries.

3. The most dangerous aspect of the Doha Round, however, is likely to be the negotiations on *Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)*. If the current negotiations lead to the adoption of the Swiss non-linear formula, then this could well mean the end of all flexibilities without which any prospect for industrialisation of African countries as well as some of the smaller countries in Asia will disappear. Here therefore there is need for the Chambers of Commerce and Industries of Asian and African countries to get together to work out a common strategy before Hong Kong.

4. There are issues related to *services liberalisation* that could be divisive of the unity of the Afro-Asian countries. African countries in the main are service importers and have very few offensive interests, except in mode four (movement of natural persons), but very little progress is likely on this. On the other hand, some of the bigger Asian countries have offensive interests in trade liberalisation in services, especially in the telecommunications and software industries. Here is an area where Asian and African business interests can sit together and work out *complementary* scenarios where Africa could benefit from technology transfers as a quid pro quo for opening up their services market – this preferably within the GSTP framework (see 6 below).

5. The question of *Special and Differential Treatment* has been a long-standing matter in the WTO, one that is potentially divisive of Asia and Africa. The developed countries are seeking to set

the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the bulk of whom are in Africa, apart from the other developing countries. There is therefore need for them to work out joint strategies that would take into account the vulnerabilities of the LDCs without sacrificing the interests of the other developing countries.

6. The third round of the *Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP)* was launched as a result of the Sao Paulo consensus reached at the last UNCTAD conference. There is some urgency in this matter in that there are real gains to be made in this process. However, African countries might be able to contribute to this only if the more advanced Asian countries do not demand reciprocal trade concessions.

7. There is the need to put in place a mechanism to put back the issue of reforming the global financial architecture (the issue was sidetracked at the Monterrey Conference) back on the agenda of the Finance for Development process.

Underlying all this is the need to put in place a set of rules and guidelines that are *qualitatively* different from the winner takes all cut-throat competitive paradigm of negotiations which is the hallmark of the WTO. Central to these rules is the *principle of non-reciprocity* between unequal trading partners, and the *principle of exchange that goes beyond mercantilist trade*, and that can encompass relationships based on solidarity and camaraderie. (The Alba agreement between Cuba and Venezuela could serve as a useful model).

That – the spirit of solidarity and camaraderie in the face of common threats to Africa and Asia, and their common interest to safeguard their hard won independence and maximise their policy space -- was the essence of Bandung in 1955. That spirit needs to be resurrected, and a more broadly based relationship worked out between Asia and Africa that goes beyond the interests of the business communities. Only in that condition can

the business communities also flourish and contribute to the wider well-being of their peoples and their nations.

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The new Asian-African strategic partnership declaration

*A number of institutional processes to bring the two continents of Asia and Africa closer together have been launched at the recent Summit held in Jakarta. For instance, a Summit of Heads of State/Government every four years; a Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers every two years; and Sectoral Ministerial and other Technical Meetings when deemed necessary. A Business Summit in conjunction with the Summit of Heads of State/Government will be held every four years. in conjunction with the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African Conference of 1955, the following Declaration was issued by the **leaders of Asia and Africa** meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, on 24th April, 2005.*

“We, the Leaders of Asian and African countries, have gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22-23 April 2005 for the Asian-African Summit to reinvigorate the Spirit of Bandung as enshrined in the Final Communiqué of the 1955 Asian-African Conference and to chart the future cooperation between our two continents towards a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP).

We reiterate our conviction that the Spirit of Bandung, the core principles of which are solidarity, friendship and cooperation, continues to be a solid, relevant and effective foundation for fostering better relations among Asian and African countries and resolving global issues of common concern. The 1955 Bandung Conference remains as a beacon in guiding the future progress of Asia and Africa.

We note with satisfaction that since the 1955 Conference, Asian and African countries have attained significant political advances. We have successfully combated the scourge of colonialism and consistently fought racism. In particular, the abolishment of apartheid represents a milestone in Asian-African cooperation and we reaffirm our continued determination to eradicate racism and all forms of discrimination. As a result of our efforts over the last fifty years, we are all independent, sovereign and equal nations striving for the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. However, having made these political gains, we are concerned that we have not yet attained commensurate progress in the social and economic spheres. We recognize the need to continuously strengthen the process of nation and state-building, as well as social integration.

We remain committed to the principle of self-determination as set forth in the Final Communiqué of the 1955 Bandung Conference and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In particular, we express our abhorrence that, fifty years since the 1955 Bandung Conference, the Palestinian people remain deprived of their right to independence. We remain steadfast in our support for the Palestinian people and the creation of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

We emphasize the importance of multilateral approaches to international relations and the need for countries to strictly abide by the principles of international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations. As Asia and Africa represent the majority in the community of nations, we reaffirm the need to support and strengthen multilateralism in order to address global issues, including reforming multilateral institutions.

We recognize that the current global situation and the prevailing conditions in Asia and Africa necessitate the need to actively pursue a common view and collective action to ensure the equitable

sharing of the benefits of globalization. We are determined to meet the internationally agreed targets and goals aimed at poverty eradication, development and growth, and underline the necessity for all parties to honour their commitments in this regard. We emphasize the importance of enhancing cooperation with all regions.

We underline the importance of dialogue among civilizations to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and respect for religious, cultural, language and racial diversities as well as gender equality.

We acknowledge the positive development of intra-regional/sub-regional integration in both continents. Nevertheless, continent-wide inter-regional cooperation among the two continents needs to be developed. We are convinced that cooperation between sub-regional organizations, through sharing experiences and best practices, can propel growth and sustainable development.

We underline the importance of bringing the regions closer together by utilizing the advantages derived from the commonalities and diversity of, as well as the new and encouraging developments in, both regions. We emphasize both the collective responsibilities and the important role of all stakeholders in exploring innovative and concrete ways and means to strengthen cooperation between Asia and Africa.

In this regard, we acknowledge the importance of complementing and building upon existing initiatives that link the two continents, inter alia Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), China-Africa Cooperation Forum (CACF), India-Africa Cooperation, Indonesia-Brunei Darussalam sponsored Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation, Vietnam-Africa Business Forum, and the Smart Partnership Initiative and the Langkawi International Dialogue. We stress the importance of streamlining and aligning existing initiatives for coherence and

maximum benefit and to avoid duplication.

We acknowledge the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the African Union's programme for poverty eradication, socio-economic development and growth and accept it as the framework for engagement with Africa. We express our support for the implementation of NEPAD.

We underscore the urgency of promoting economic development in the Asian and African regions, as stipulated in the 1955 Bandung Conference. We stress that poverty and under-development, gender mainstreaming, communicable diseases, environmental degradation, natural disasters, drought and desertification, digital divide, inequitable market access, and foreign debt, remain as issues of common concern which call for our closer cooperation and collective action.

We envision an Asian-African region at peace with itself and with the world at large working together as a concert of nations in harmony, non-exclusive, bonded in dynamic partnership and conscious of our historical ties and cultural heritage. We visualize an affluent Asian-African region characterized by equitable growth, sustainable development as well as a common determination to enhance the quality of life and well-being of our people. We further envisage a caring Asian-African society where the people live in stability, prosperity, dignity and free from the fear of violence, oppression and injustice.

To this end, we hereby declare, as an expression of our new political will, the establishment of a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) as a framework to build a bridge between Asia and Africa covering three broad areas of partnership, namely political solidarity, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural relations. The strategic partnership provides a momentum in achieving peace, prosperity and progress, and will be based on the following principles and ideals:

1. The Ten Principles of Bandung of the 1955 Asian – African Conference;
2. Recognition of diversity between and within the regions, including different social and economic systems and levels of development;
3. Commitment to open dialogue, based on mutual respect and benefit;
4. Promotion of non-exclusive cooperation by involving all stakeholders;
5. Attainment of practical and sustainable cooperation based on comparative advantage, equal partnership, common ownership and vision, as well as a firm and shared conviction to address common challenges;
6. Promotion of sustainable partnership by complementing and building upon existing regional/sub-regional initiatives in Asia and Africa;
7. Promotion of a just, democratic, transparent, accountable and harmonious society;
8. Promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development;
9. Promotion of collective and unified efforts in multilateral fora.

The NAASP shall emphasize the need to promote practical cooperation between the two continents in areas such as trade, industry, investment, finance, tourism, information and communication technology, energy, health, transportation, agriculture, water resources and fisheries.

The NAASP shall also address issues of common concern such as, armed conflict, weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crimes and terrorism, which are fundamental to ensuring peace, stability, and security.

We are determined to prevent conflict and resolve disputes by peaceful means and endeavour to explore innovative mechanisms for confidence building and dispute resolution as well as for post-conflict peace-building.

The NAASP shall promote human resource development, enhanced capacity building and technical cooperation in order

to create an enabling environment for the betterment of the regions.

We resolve that the sustainability of the NAASP shall be conducted through three tiers of interaction: an intergovernmental forum; sub-regional organizations; and people-to-people interaction, particularly business, academia, and civil society.

We are determined to develop an institutionalized process of the NAASP through convening: a Summit of Heads of State/Government every four years; a Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers every two years; and Sectoral Ministerial and other Technical Meetings when deemed necessary. A Business Summit in conjunction with the Summit of Heads of State/Government will be held every four years.

We pledge to our peoples our joint determination and commitment to bringing the NAASP into reality by implementing concrete actions for the benefit and prosperity of our peoples.”

Editorial: Bandung and Afro-Asian Cooperation: Rhetoric or Transformation in Relations?

Chandrakant Patel

At the recently concluded meetings in Jakarta and Bandung to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Afro-Asian meeting in Bandung in 1955, the President of Indonesia observed: “ It took fifty long years for this Conference to happen, but Asia and Africa have finally assembled here again.” Reflecting on the achievements of the first Conference (which was attended by, among others, President Soekarno of Indonesia, President Nasser of Egypt, Prime Ministers Chou En Lai and Jawaharlal Nehru of China and India respectively), the President of Indonesia went on to ask:

“Why did it take 50 years — a lifetime — for Asia and Africa to reconvene, after the success of the first Summit in 1955?”

We must ask: Does the Bandung Spirit mean the same in 2005 as it did in 1955? If the Bandung spirit has served us well over the years, how can we adapt that spirit to today's circumstances?

And we must ask: now that Asia-Africa is reconvened in great numbers and with robust confidence, how can we make it relevant? Relevant to us, and relevant to the world?

Against this note of expectations, it must be observed that the very fact that the Conference took place and in a modest if not practical way succeeded in outlining the broad contours of political, economic and social cooperation between the two regions is an important development. Only time will tell whether the Conference has succeeded in shifting the colonial and therefore contrived patterns of linkages from North-South to Africa-Asia and to South-South.

There can be little doubt, however, that trade and investment ties between Asia and Africa are growing at a faster pace than between North and South. Still the combined share of Africa and Asia in world trade since the 1990s has risen markedly, from about a fifth to over a quarter of world total. Secondly, trade among developing countries has become the most dynamic component of international trade. In the decade of the 1990's, for example, trade among them grew at annual average of 11 percent, by far exceeding the 6 percent growth in world trade. As a result, the share of intra-developing trade has expanded from a modest 8 percent to over 13 percent of the total over the same period. More than 40 percent of their exports of agriculture and manufactured products are now destined for each other's markets. In consequence, structure of their trade has altered dramatically: whereas two decades ago, primary commodities accounted for nearly 75 percent of their exports, they now account for less than 30 percent. Even for Africa, there has been a modest rise in the share of manufactured goods. If Africa's trade with Asia were to continue to grow at similar rates over the

next two decades i.e. at just over 10 per cent annually, a massive diversification of Africa's trade structure is likely to take place. This will not only significantly lessen its dependence on traditional markets of developed countries but also more importantly, re-orient its trade towards the more dynamic markets of Asia. It is therefore not surprising that an increasing number of countries in Africa are designing strategies and policies to take into account this prospect. Zimbabwe's "Go East" policy, now reportedly under consideration by other countries in the region, is a good example of this trend. They are grounded in emerging complementarities induced by rapid growth in import demand from Asia and growth of Asian SMEs-led investments in Africa.

It is equally true that much of the expansion in trade, investment and technology transfers is autonomous i.e. market-driven and concentrated in a few sectors and countries. If the benefits of such expansion are to be widely shared, it will in all likelihood require much greater attention and involvement of the policy-makers of the two regions. If the emerging trends are to lead to more fundamental and qualitative changes in economic relations, a structure and a system of cooperation will have to be built around instruments such as GSTP and away from donor-inspired frameworks of EPAS, AGOA and the like.

Regional and inter-regional efforts at cooperation have so far largely focused on the mutual gains from closer economic relations. Without greater commitment and efforts on part of the political establishments of the respective continents, however, economic cooperation will, in all likelihood, continue to remain below the potential warranted by their complementarities. The New Strategy of Afro-Asian cooperation must accordingly be based on sustained political commitment to ensure its progress and implementation. This includes as close harmonization of positions as possible in global negotiations on matters of environment, social justice,

reforms of global institutions, international trade, investment and other development issues. At the national level, where the primary impetus for greater cooperation must be nurtured, greater effort needs to be made to raise awareness about the political importance of Afro-Asian cooperation.

Arrangements for improved Afro-Asian cooperation must perforce take into account the striking changes that have taken place in the global economic and political environment over the past fifty years. Many of these changes warrant new approaches and engagement of new actors in driving cooperation: for example, the role of technology, of private sector and in particular the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), improved communications and the need for larger markets in the wake of new integrated production and distribution systems all need to be given considerably greater weight and attention than was the case fifty years ago.

The dramatic transformation of many economies in Asia has altered the scope for mutual cooperation distinctly in favor of increased inter and intra-regional cooperation. The emergence of ASEAN, China and India, among others, as important players on the global scene is beginning to reshape economic geography and quality of trade relations as they intensify their cooperation with each other and with other developing countries. Likewise, rapid growth and demand for

products of Africa has spurred the interests of business and investment community in Asia to forge fresh links with Africa. Arrangements for improved Afro-Asian cooperation must perforce take into account the striking changes that have taken place in the global economic and political environment over the past fifty years. Many of these changes warrant new approaches and engagement of new actors in driving cooperation: for example, the role of technology, of private sector and in particular the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), improved communications and the need for larger markets in the wake of new integrated production and distribution systems all need to be given considerably greater weight and attention than was the case fifty years ago.

The real challenge before the Afro-Asian policy-makers is to ensure that patterns of Asian-African trade does not replicate North-South linkages: it must, for example, be informed by new trade rules in which the fruits of value chain are equitably distributed; in which dependency of debtor-creditor relationship is largely absent; in which rules of origin encourage investments and technology transfers at source; and in which the weaker trading partners are protected. It is possible to conceive of a new paradigm of economic relations. But is the political leadership in the two regions really prepared to implement the vision of Bandung?

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